

Affected Environment

Those elements of the project area which may be changed by the proposed alternatives. These changes may be positive or negative in nature.

Alignment

In transportation, the horizontal and vertical ground plan of a roadway, railroad transit route, or other facility as it would appear in plan and profile.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

Federal law that mandates extensive changes in building codes, transportation, and hiring practices to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, not only in projects involving federal dollars, but in connection with all new public places, conveyances, and employers. The significance of ADA in transportation is mainly felt in terms of transit operations, capital improvements, and hiring.

Capacity

The maximum number of vehicles that a given section of roadway or traffic lane can accommodate in one direction in one hour.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Air Pollutant caused by automobile emissions. Advanced health effects can occur when the carbon monoxide levels exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for carbon monoxide. The primary method of reducing carbon monoxide levels is through reductions in automobile pollution emissions using such measures as federal motor vehicle emission standards and local emission testing programs. Improvements to transit service which result in fewer vehicles, and therefore less vehicle emission, would help in meeting and/or maintaining NAAQS for carbon monoxide.

Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990

Federal law that identifies “mobile sources” (vehicles) as primary sources of pollution and call for stringent new requirements in metropolitan areas and states where attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) is or could be a problem.

Collector/Distributor Road (C/D Road)

A one-way roadway at an interchange that is separated from the freeway main line (through traffic) and provides access between two or more adjacent interchange ramps and the freeway mainline.

Commuter Trip Reduction Law (CTR)

This state law requires major employers in the eight most populous counties of the state to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by their employees. SOV trips and VMT must be reduced from a baseline year within homogeneous trip-reduction zones. The reduction goals are 15% by 1995, 25% by 1997, and 35% by 1999.

Comprehensive Plan

A compendium of maps, charts, and text which contain a city or county's plan for long-term development. Also a legal document required by the state's Growth Management Act. The detailed requirements for the plan are outlined in RCW 36.70A.

Concurrency

The Growth Management Act requires that adequate public services and facilities such as water, sewer, storm drainage, and transportation infrastructure must be available at the time new development is occupied. Also, the level of service for that infrastructure must meet standards set by the city or county.

Conformity

A federal and state requirement that transportation plans, programs, and projects should improve, not worsen air quality. Conformity applies in those counties in which there is a nonattainment area for carbon monoxide, particulate matter, or ozone.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

A categorical funding program contained in Title 1 of ISTEA that provides funds for projects and activities to reduce congestion and improve ambient air quality. To be eligible for CMAQ, projects and activities must contribute to achieving National Ambient Air Quality Standards and must be included in a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Corridor

A strip of land or linear band, normally within a system corridor, through which various alternative transportation facilities may be placed, allowing flexibility of alignment that is refined at the design stage. Location corridors are chosen based on social, economic, environmental, engineering and transportation factors.

dBA

The sound pressure levels in decibels measured with a frequency weighting network corresponding to the A-scale on a standard sound level meter. The A-scale tends to suppress lower frequencies, e.g. below 1.000 Hz.

Decibel

The basic unit of sound pressure level measurement. It represents one-tenth of a Bel, a measurement on a logarithmic scale which indicates the ratio between two sound powers. A ratio of 2 in power corresponds to a difference of 3 decibels between the two sounds.

Design Standards

Engineering Principles which determine the principal features of the highway.

Environmental Justice

On Feb. 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 entitled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”. Its goal is to avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority populations. WSDOT has endeavored to explicitly demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to issues affecting low income and minority neighborhoods.

4(f)

Section 4(f) of the (U.S.) Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 303) states that the FHWA will not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or significant historic site unless a determination is made that:

(1) There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the property; and

(2) The proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

The Section 4(f) evaluation is a separate analysis of impacts to Section 4(f) resources that would be caused by the various alternatives under consideration.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

A state law passed by the legislature in 1990 and amended in 1991 which addresses the negative consequences of unprecedented population growth and suburban sprawl in Washington state. The GMA requires all cities and counties in the state to do some planning and has more extensive requirements for the largest and fastest-growing counties and cities in the state. It’s requirements include guaranteeing the consistency of transportation and capital facilities plans with land use plans.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

An automobile, van, pick-up truck, or bus that carries enough people to travel in the HOV or Diamond Lane. In Washington state, most HOV lanes require that two or more persons travel together, although in some places three people are needed.

Impact

A direct or indirect consequence of the construction or operation of a proposed alternative on the environment in the study area.

Interdisciplinary Team

A group of employees from the WSDOT and other agencies who have expertise in a variety of subject areas. This group conducts preliminary design and environmental studies to analyze the engineering, environmental, economic and social impacts of various project proposals. This leads to the development of a departmental recommendation for the project. The Team also is responsible for integration of the Public involvement Plan in the planning and design process.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)

The most recent federal surface transportation act; federal law that provides conditions and authorization for flow of federal highway revenue to states for roads, transit, ferries, and other transportation purposes.

Level-Of -Service

A qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream; generally described in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and infrastructure as a part of the policies governing growth management.

Mainline

The through lane(s) of the roadway.

Metropolitan Planning Organization

The agency designated by the governor (or governors in a multi-state areas) to administer the federally required transportation planning process in a metropolitan area. An MPO must be in place in every urbanized area over 50,000 population. The MPO may also be Council of Governments, Planning Association, Planning Authority, Regional or Area Planning Council, or Regional or Area Planning Commission. ISTEA provides procedures under which local governments and governor(s) may designate or redesignate an MPO.

Mitigative Measure

An action taken to reduce or eliminate an adverse impact stemming from construction or operation or maintenance of a proposed action alternative.

Multi-Modal

Concerning or involving more than one transportation mode (e.g. buses, carpools, trolleys, private automobiles) at the same time.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Standards created by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help mitigate the health impacts of air pollution. EPA established NAAQS measures for six pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone, particulate matter, lead, sulfur dioxide, and nitrous oxide.

National Highway System

Designated by Congress in 1995 and contains all Interstate routes, a large percentage of urban and rural principal arterials, and strategic highways and connectors. ISTEA funding will be available for the NHS.

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

A part of the Clean Water Act that requires point source dischargers of pollutants to obtain a permit. The Department of Transportation is affected by this requirement because of highway runoff. The Department of Ecology administers the permitting process.

Nonattainment Area

A nonattainment area does not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. In Washington, Seattle/Tacoma, Spokane, and Vancouver are nonattainment areas for ozone and/or carbon monoxide. There are other nonattainment areas for particulate matter.

Overcrossing, Overpass

A grade separation where the freeway passes over the crossroad or rail line.

Peak Hour

A single morning or evening hour during which the maximum traffic volume occurs.

Peak Period

The time period during which the transportation system operates at or near the maximum traffic volume.

PM10

An air quality measurement of particulate matter smaller than or equal to 10 microns.

Regional Transportation Plan

A plan required of all Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) receiving funding for regional planning under the Regional Transportation Plan Program of the Growth Management Act.

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

Authorized by the Legislature in 1990 as part of the Growth Management Act. RTPOs are created by local governments to coordinate transportation planning among jurisdictions and to develop a regional transportation plan. Washington state provides funding and a formal mechanism that is available to all local governments (and not only those required to plan under GMA) and the State to coordinate transportation planning for regional transportation facilities. Currently, RTPOs are formed through voluntary associations of local governments within regions defined as at least one county with at least 100,000 population or at least three counties if the combined population is less than 100,000.

Relocation

A program for the fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced as a result of public works programs undertaken by state and local governments so that such persons do not suffer disproportionate impacts as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole.

Right of Way

Land, property or property interest, usually in a strip, acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes.

State Implementation Plan (SIP)

A three-year investment strategy required at the state level, that addresses the goals of the state long-range plan and lists priority projects and activities throughout the state.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

One of the key capital programs in Title 1 of ISTEA. It provides flexibility in expenditure of “road” funds for nonmotorized and transit modes and for a category of activities known as transportation enhancements. It also broadens the definition of eligible transportation activities to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and enhancement of community and environmental quality with 10 categories of activities.

Transportation Control Measures

Implemented to enable nonattainment areas to meet their emissions goals. They can include TDM measures, parking policies and pricing, or other system improvements that reduce congestion.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

An effort to reduce the number of people traveling by single-occupant vehicles (SOV) by promoting non SOV modes of transportation (e.g.; carpools, vanpools, transit). TDM efforts may also discourage the use of SOVs by imposing tolls or taxes.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A three-year transportation investment strategy required under ISTEA. It is similar to the six-year program required by state law, which addresses the goals of the long range plans and lists priority projects and activities for the region. [At the state level, the TIP is also known as a state transportation improvement plan (STIP), not to be confused with a SIP. TIPs from all regions are incorporated in the STIP.]

Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)

Areas subject to special requirements under ISTEA and in some cases benefit from preferential treatment with regard to air quality needs and local authority to select transportation projects. Any urban area over 200,000 population is automatically a Transportation Management Area, which subjects it to additional planning requirements but also entitles it to funds earmarked for large urbanized areas under the Surface Transportation Program. Additional areas may be designated TMAs if the governor and the MPO or affected local officials request designation. Such a designation would entitle them to greater local project selection authority through their MPOs and to STP funds earmarked for large urban areas. TMAs must also prepare Congestion Management Systems.

Transportation System Management (TSM)

A variety of actions and activities designed to make the existing transportation system more efficient. For example, traffic synchronization.

Undercrossing, Underpass

A grade separation where the freeway passes under the crossroad or rail line.

Urban Growth Areas

Areas where urban growth will be encouraged. Counties and cities must cooperatively establish the urban growth areas. Cities must be located inside urban growth area. Once established, cities cannot annex land outside the urban growth boundary. Growth outside of the urban growth boundary must be rural in character.

Weaving

The traffic flow stemming from the crossing of traffic streams moving in the same direction as associated with closely spaced adjacent on and off-ramps.

Wetlands

Lands that are either permanently or seasonally inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction.